

Remarks for Assembly Committee on Criminal Justice

Regarding AB 51 – Internet Harassment

By Representative Donald Friske

April 11, 2007

Thank you Chairman Kleefisch and Committee members. I appreciate your hearing today and scheduling this legislation for your consideration.

Under current law, it is illegal to use the Internet or email to harass another person. However it is not illegal to encourage others, known or unknown to a perpetrator, to harass someone.

Currently there is no penalty for someone, an ex- boyfriend or girlfriend for example, to put a posting on the Internet, posing as their ex-, at a bulletin board website of a sexual nature in order to encourage visitors to the website to contact the ex- whose identity has been hijacked.

Last session, concerns were raised regarding a requirement that the person actually be harassed in order for a crime to have occurred.

This bill will create a penalty for such an action. The penalty is a Class A misdemeanor, punishable by up to nine months in jail, a \$10,000 fine or both.

In the 2003 and 2005 sessions this bill received broad support and passed in the Assembly unanimously on voice votes. It also passed unanimously in the Senate Committee on Judiciary, Corrections and Privacy. However it was not scheduled for consideration in the full Senate before the end of either session.

Thank you for your consideration of this legislation. I look forward to working with you to ensure real security for Wisconsin's citizens from real threats to their security from virtual weapons of intimidation.